

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 02815 200805Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8034
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2815

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, LE
SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: CONVERSATION WITH CECIL HOURANI (II)

REF: BEIRUT 2672

1. CECIL HOURANI CALLED BRIEFLY ON CHARGE MORNING MAY 19, FOLLOWING HIS VISIT TO MARJAYUN (REFTEL). HE SAID HE HAD GONE VIA TYRE AND REMARKED THAT HE HAD PASSED THROUGH TERRITORY CONTROLLED BY FIVE DIFFERENT ELEMENTS -- ADF, PALESTINIAN, UNIFIL, ISRAELI, AND LEBANESE. HOURANI SAID THAT ISRAELIS HAVE NOW OFFICIALLY WITHDDAWN FROM MARJAYUN AREA AT REQUEST OF MAJOR HADDAD, ALTHOUGH ISRAELI PATROLS STILL WENT BACK AND FORTH REGULARLY. ISRAELIS HAD ALLOWED HADDAD TO ESTABLISH HIS OWN CHECKPOINTS IN "HIS AREA," MANNED BY LEBANESE SOLDIERS UNDER HADDAD'S CONTROL. ISRAELIS WERE TREATING HADDAD AS OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF LEBANESE GOVERNMENT.

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2. HOURANI SAID THERE HAD BEEN CONSIDERABLE DESTRUCTION IN MARJAYUN AREA, INCLUDING THE MILITARY CASERN IN THE TOWN ITSELF, WHICH HAD BEEN BADLY DAMAGED. ISRAELIS HAD JUST COMPLETED REPAIRS TO THIS BUILDING AND IN APPRECIATION MAJOR HADDAD HAS HOSTED A DINNER AT THE CASERN FOR ISRAELI MILITARY OFFICERS, INCLUDING GENERAL

EITAN.

3. HOURANI SAID HE HAD LONG CONVERSATION WITH HADDAD WHO REPEATEDLY ASSERTED THAT HE WAS A LOYAL LEBANESE WHO WISHED TO COOPERATE WITH CENTRAL GOL AUTHORITY AND THAT HE COOPERATED WITH ISRAELIS ONLY BECAUSE HE HAD NO CHOICE. HOURANI SAID HE HAD URGED FONMIN BOUTROS IN A SHORT MEETING ON MAY 18 TO SEND A LEBANESE OFFICER TO TALK WITH HADDAD, BUT THAT BOUTROS HAD SAID THIS WOULD RAISE MANY PROBLEMS. GOL WAS ALREADY BEING CRITICIZED FOR BEING SOFT ON HADDAD, BOUTROS SAID, AND, IF THEY WERE TO HAVE FORMAL TALKS WITH HIM, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT HE WAS BEING GIVEN STATUS AS EQUAL.

4. HOURANI SAID HE WAS PARTICULARLY DISTURBED BY TWO ASPECTS OF THE SOUTH LEBANON SITUATION:

A. THERE WAS NO COORDINATION BETWEEN THE VARIOUS PARTIES CONCERNED -- THE ISRAELIS, GOL, UNIFIL AND THE PALESTINIANS. WE AGREED THAT ILMAC PROVIDED AN EXCELLENT FRAMEWORK FOR CONSULTATIONS AMONG AT LEAST THE FIRST THREE AND HOURANI SAID HE WOULD URGE BOUTROS, IN A MEETING LATER TODAY, TO PUSH FOR SUCH TALKS.

B. HOURANI SAID THAT HADDAD HAS NO INSTRUCTIONS FROM CONFIDENTIAL

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THE GOL AS TO HOW HE WAS TO DEAL WITH UNIFIL, NOR HAD UNIFIL COMMANDERS BEEN TOLD HOW TO TREAT HADDAD. HE THOUGHT IT EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT THIS QUESTION BE RESOLVED BEFORE AN UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT OCCURRED.

5. COMMENT: HOURANI'S INTEREST IN SOUTH LEBANON IS MORE THAN ACADEMIC; HE WOULD OBVIOUSLY LIKE TO PLAY A ROLE HIMSELF AS AN INTERMEDIARY AMONG SOME OF THE PARTIES.

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